

Career Coaching at Carteret Community College

Carteret Community College Career Coaches had a strong presence in all four county high schools this year, as well as implementing several activities for middle school students to expose them to the community college and careers. Career Coaches made thirty-two presentations to high school classes, focusing on career assessments, using the Virtual Job Shadowing platform, and career exploration. We designed a CCC Website Scavenger Hunt as a fun way to allow students to explore our website and discover program offerings. We worked closely with the Career Development Coordinators to target students that would benefit from one-on-one meetings with a Career Coach. We often brought high school students on CCC's campus to tour college programs and to meet with program area instructors, assisting in their decision-making process.

In addition, we hosted high school students on our campus for a Manufacturing Day in the fall, where we exposed them to our welding and boat-manufacturing program, bringing in industry representatives (Shearline Boats and Jarret Bay Boatworks) to talk about their businesses. We had assisted in planning and implementing a Career Day at Croatan High School and participated in Career Cafes at East Carteret and West Carteret High School and at several middle schools.

Every eighth-grade student in the county (with exception of one school (227 students), which scheduled a tour but did not attend due to COVID stay-at-home orders) toured the community college and met key college faculty. In addition, middle school students attended specific program area events on our campus. We hosted a Middle School Manufacturing Day, Middle School Culinary Day, and a Middle School Forensics Day, allowing approximately 240 eighth graders to explore career interests in more depth.

We had scheduled four events for high school students to bring them on our campus for more career specific exploration, but these events did not happen due to COVID stay-at-home orders. We had scheduled a Construction Careers Day, in conjunction with several local contractors and the county Homebuilder's Association and local contractors (75 students invited), a Health Sciences Day, co-sponsored by our local hospital, Carteret Health Care (75 students invited), and a Spa Services Day (20 students invited), in conjunction with Great Clips. We had also worked with the Chamber of Commerce, the Economic Development Council and the NCWorks Career Center to sponsor the Eastern Carolina Job Fair. Over 50 businesses/industries were to be represented. We had arranged for high school seniors who had not made career plans to attend the Job Fair for a "speed-jobbing" event (60 students). It was extremely disappointing that those events did not happen.

Career Coaches work closely with local industry to keep up with workforce trends and local employment needs. Coaches regularly attend Chamber of Commerce events and participate in Leadership Carteret for Educators, a weeklong event for educators, to tour local industries and hear from business leaders about community workforce needs. We offer a job board through the college's Career Center.

Since the stay-at-home orders, career coaches have tried to keep in contact with high school students. We composed a letter that was sent to all county high school seniors, encouraging them to contact a career coach for admissions or program information. We maintained regular contact with CDC's, letting them know that we were available to assist students with career and college planning. We offered the Virtual Job Shadowing platform to CDC's and other Career and Technical Education teachers. Virtual Job Shadow has numerous ready-made virtual lessons on career exploration, job seeking skills and soft skills.

One Career Coach worked with Middle School CDC, Kelly Hoff, to develop a CCC virtual campus tour to use with the eighth graders that were unable to come on campus for their scheduled tour. A Career Coach also worked with Middle School CDC and WIOA Staff to create a power point entitled "Finding Your First Job", which was sent to all eighth-tenth graders in the public schools.

Even though Career Coaches were readily available to high school and middle school students, few students took advantage of one-on-one conversations.